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ABSTRACT

The Minnesota State Planning Agency conducted a study in Region 7W, consisting of Stearns, Benton, Sherburne, and Wright counties, to determine the nature and extent of educational programs designed for people who have completed secondary education and which are offered by any institution or agency outside the traditional postsecondary institutional sector. (These agencies included profit and nonprofit business organizations and industries, citizens' associations and interest groups, government agencies, labor unions, trade associations, professional organizations, private social welfare organizations, public secondary schools, regional associations and commissions, and religious organizations.) Further, the study was designed to identify and describe the major educational networks providing such educational programs. Findings showed that of the over 23,321 people in Region 7W who were served in 460 different educational offerings lasting three hours or longer and of an occupational or intellectual nature, most lived in or near the cities of St. Cloud and Buffalo, were between the ages of 22 and 45, were female (approximately 75%), possessed a high school diploma, had some postsecondary education or training, and belonged to the middle socioeconomic group. This summary report, in addition to an overview of the study, includes major findings resulting from sectoring according to the content of educational offerings, major findings resulting from sectoring according to the type of education provided, a discussion of the general implications of the findings, and an appendix containing selected graphs and charts. (SH)

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ALTERNATIVES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING IN MINNESOTA:

THE NONFORMAL EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

SUMMARY REPORT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
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Minnesota State Planning Agency
December, 1976

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of "lifelong learning" is emerging as an important dimension of the education process. The yearly increase in offerings geared to the needs and interests of learners over age eighteen underscores the crucial role education plays in helping people deal effectively with the complex demands of a rapidly-changing society. By 1977, continuing education will encompass a larger number of students than will the enrollment of young students in the formal educational system (Moses). This trend is expected to increase in the years ahead. In addition, recent research emphasizes that adults as learners display unique characteristics which suggest different planning and implementation considerations. Therefore, providing for the learning needs of adults is an activity with its own requirements and is important in its own right.

As important as continuing education is and will continue to be, it would be an oversight to make planning decisions affecting all citizens without information as to the nature and extent of the total range of existing programs designed for them. This fact became overwhelmingly clear during a study conducted by this author in the summer of 1975 which surveyed learning opportunities offered by formal post-secondary institutions which were of special appeal to adults who had postponed or interrupted their educations (Knight). It is imperative that all providers of educational opportunities for adults be studied because most adults enroll in continuing education courses outside of

formal post-secondary institutions and will continue to do so. Further, as vocational schools, colleges, and universities look to the adult sector of the population as potential students, planners and policy-makers need to understand what is already being done in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and competition. Finally, it is crucial that efforts be made to explore the myriad of learning resources available in any given community, many of which remain untapped and overlooked.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

For these reasons, the Minnesota State Planning Agency has conducted a study in a single four-county region to determine the nature and extent of educational programs designed for people who have completed secondary education (or who are beyond the compulsory school age) and which are offered by any institution or agency outside the traditional post-secondary institutional sector. Further, the study was designed to identify and describe the major educational networks providing such educational programs.

In this context, it seems helpful to classify education and educational providers into three sectors:

Formal - includes:

- Vocational and technical schools
- Community colleges
- Four-year colleges
- Universities and graduate colleges
- Correspondence, proprietary schools

Non-Formal - includes:

- Business organizations

Citizens associations, interest groups

Government agencies

Labor unions

Mass media

Professional organizations

Private social welfare organizations

Service clubs

Community education programs of secondary schools

Informal - includes:

Self

Family

Social groups

Neighborhood haunts

Personal media (Adapted from Seay)

The providers studied in this report are those classified as "nonformal" and which offer organized, structured educational programs.

In order to limit the scope of the study, data relative to 1974-75 was collected only for those educational activities which were of three hours or longer in duration, and which had as their goals occupational and career advancement or intellectual and personal development. Therefore, hobby-related and recreational activities were not considered in the scope of this report, nor were regularly-scheduled meetings, speeches or conventions unless they proved to include special learning sessions lasting longer than three hours. Counseling, therapeutic and other direct service activities were also not considered appropriate to the report.

The data collection instrument, a questionnaire, was administered personally in on-site visits by study staff and requested information

relative to the nature and extent of programs offered, faculty and student characteristics, target population, and revenue sources.

The overall aim of the project was to outline the "nature of the universe" in a single four-county region and to identify the basic networks, resources, and 'state of the art' in the nonformal educational sector in addition to designing appropriate research methods for future studies. Region 7W, comprised of Stearns, Benton, Sherburne, and Wright counties, was selected as the study area due to the presence of a larger city (St. Cloud) as well as numerous small communities with a strongly rural character. Timelines for the project included six weeks for background research and design, twelve weeks for data collection, and four weeks for tabulation and report completion. Study staff consisted of one full-time planner and a community-based part-time intern.

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PLAN OF THE COMPLETE REPORT

Since the goal of the report was to describe previously uncharted territory, efforts were made to provide as much descriptive information as possible.

An introductory essay is included in order to more adequately analyze the significance of the providers comprising the nonformal educational sector, afford an overview of recent research efforts, and describe recent trends toward educational networking and brokering.

A brief sketch of Region 7W describes the geographical, economic, and population characteristics of that area which are relevant for educational planning.

The information collected in on-site visits is organized according to two schemata: 1) by the nature of the content of educational offerings provided; and, 2) by the nature of the provider. As the former method seems to provide a more meaningful and comprehensive method for studying post-secondary education, it is discussed in the greatest detail.

In addition, implications of the study findings are outlined and policy questions raised.

A final section contains a number of practical suggestions for carrying out similar studies and includes the revised data collection instrument used in this project.

This summary report includes:

1. A synopsis of the introductory essay.
2. An overview of the findings resulting from sectoring according to the content of educational offerings.
3. A summary of the findings resulting from sectoring according to the type of educational provider.

4. A discussion of the general implications of the findings.
5. A brief Appendix containing selected graphs and charts.

THE NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NONFORMAL EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

Introduction

During the past several years, the inadequacies of the traditionally-held view of education as the preparation of young people for adult life have increasingly come to light. New interest in the concept of "lifelong learning" has been displayed not only by educators, but by politicians, mass media, and the general American public as well. The three major factors which account for the expanding concept of education are: 1) demographic trends indicating an increase in the proportion of people over age 25; 2) the necessity for allocating scarce public monies equitably among educational providers; and, 3) the expansion of the concept of education to include the existence of alternative modes for learning which occur outside the formal organizational structure of schools.

As discussed on pages 2 and 3, education may be considered as involving three sectors of providers: formal, nonformal, and informal. Of these, both the formal and nonformal provide deliberately organized and structured learning situations for persons over age 18 and are crucial in constructing a new conceptual framework for consideration in educational planning and public policy. Within such a framework, all forms of educational programs should be studied in order to determine the ways in which they can contribute to a comprehensive, articulated system which will meet the learning needs of all citizens.

The Key Notions of Continuing Education

1. Education may occur at any stage during the life span.

The insights of theoreticians, researchers, and practitioners have led to the recognition that learning is a lifelong process unconfined to one's youth or college classrooms which enables people to update their skills, broaden their career possibilities, add intellectual stimulation and cultural enrichment to their lives, and achieve greater happiness. Therefore, a truly comprehensive system for education must offer many thresholds for entrances and exits to be used according to the needs and interests of all individual participants. However, the implementation of educational programs to meet "lifelong maintenance" needs requires imagination, thought, and serious study.

2. Education occurs in a variety of locations and within many systems - formal, nonformal, and informal.

In 1972, one in ten adult Americans, or 15.7 million, reported participation in continuing education programs (NACAE). A national study by Carp, Peterson, and Roelfs (1972) indicated that 30% of the population were engaged in structured learning activities and that 75% of those aged 18-60 (80 million people) would like to participate on an organized basis.

Striking similarities exist among major studies concerning where adults receive their education (Gould, Moses, Okes, Carp).
The most important finding which emerges from all studies of where, when, how, and what adults learn is that formal educational institutions comprise only one group of providers, and, in fact, a secondary one when sponsors such as employers, community organizations, government agencies, and religious institutions are considered.

3. Continuing education encompasses those activities which represent deliberately-planned educational programs and services.

While it is of importance for planners and policy-makers to extend their notions of the contexts for education beyond the framework of formal institutions, the emphasis on systematic, organized learning activities must be retained. "Learning" can occur at any time and in any situation, but it seems wise to distinguish it from "education" which involves activity of a more structured and systematic nature. This is a subtle but important distinction which serves to help delineate those sectors which should be of concern to planners and policy-makers: the formal and the nonformal.

4. A variety of educational opportunities and services should be made available equitably to all Americans.

Numerous clientele analysis studies of participants in continuing education indicate that existing programs for adults serve those who are already relatively high on scales reflecting socio-economic status (Okes, NACAE, Academy for Educational Development). Houle (1961) summarizes:

> In general, high income groups are more likely to take part in educational activities than low income groups. Participation is also positively related to the size of the community, the length of residence in it, and the number of different kinds of educational activity available. People with certain nationality or religious backgrounds are more active than those with other backgrounds. Age is important; the very young adult seldom takes part, but there is a sharp upturn in the late twenties, a fairly constant level of activity until the age of fifty, and a decline afterward. Married people participate more than single people, and families with school age children more than families without them. Many more professional, managerial, and technical people take part relative to their number in the population than

> do people from other occupational groups; next in significance are white collar and clerical workers; then skilled laborers; and lastly unskilled laborers. But the most universally important factor is schooling. The higher the formal education of the adult, the more likely it is that he is, in fact, so significant that it underlies or reinforces many of the other determinants, such as occupation, size of community, length of stay in it, and nationality and religious background (pp. 6-7).

Two important phenomena emerge from the studies cited. Participation in all forms of continuing education is related to age, income, schooling, and social status, but is most strongly evident in programs sponsored by formal post-secondary institutions. It would seem that the public deserves a wider and more accessible range of choices than it now receives. If the facilitation of lifelong learning for all citizens is to be a goal of public policy, then a variety of educational modes for use by people of all ages should be identified or designed, articulated, and made accessible.

5. <u>The idea of lifelong education will become increasingly accepted as it is recognized that continuing their education enables people to respond more effectively to the challenges and demands of a changing society.</u>

The Carnegie Commission (1971) recognized that formal schooling will represent only one of many sources of knowledge in a rapidly-changing society.

Further, studies indicate that education enables most people to make more informed decisions about their lives and enhances their ability to achieve personal satisfaction. Lifelong learning may indeed be the basis for the American ideal of an active and informed citizenry, helping people both adjust to and modify an ever-changing world.

Future Options

The concept of networking in order to coordinate all the learning resources in a single region emerges from an analysis of the varied types of educational providers and the need for citizens to have equal access to continuing education programs. The most interesting and comprehensive efforts seem to be provided by agencies who call themselves "educational brokers."

Although a variety of brokering agencies exists, the National Center for Educational Brokering defines the four primary objectives of such organizations as follows:

1. To help people define the goals for their personal and working lives. (Entails counseling and aid in evaluating career alternatives.)

2. To help people set objectives for further education. (Involves assessment techniques and information on additional skills and/or credentials needed. Includes formal as well as other kinds of learning opportunities.)

3. To help people select learning experiences to achieve their desired competencies and certification. (Involves information on all programs.)

4. To help people gain access to appropriate learning opportunities. (Entails knowledge of institutional procedures, key personnel, and an advocacy role.)

Brokering agencies are distinctive in the ways in which clients are served in their own communities, the array of information and services offered, their role as client advocates, and their presumed flexibility to meet learning needs. In addition, the likelihood of seeking out, attracting, and serving new types of adult learners is high, in that lack of information is a frequently-cited barrier to educational participation. Cross and Jones (1972) voice a view held by many, believing that "equality of access will become a reality only

when people have equal opportunity to know about educational offerings and to influence the nature of those offerings" (p. 61).

In addition to providing direct service to learners, a second function of a brokering framework should be to facilitate linkages among all educational providers. By creating such links, the pool of regional educational resources may be expanded and brought to the service of prospective learners. Practical steps in creating such a broadly-based network might include:

1. Identifying all educational providers (formal and nonformal) in a region.
2. Determining the nature and extent of their educational activities.
3. Forming a task force of practitioners and the identified educational providers.
4. Designing a mechanism for assessing the educational needs within that region and translating them into specific types of programming.
5. Designing a coordinated delivery system with feedback loops for continuous updating and change.

A third set of functions which seems to be appropriate for an educational brokering service involves the awarding of competency-based credentials, usually termed "validation." In many cases, this might involve assistance in translating life experiences into college credit such as is already being done by libraries which offer College Level Testing Program testing services. A brokering service might be an appropriate agency for helping people make the transitions in their lives which involve some form of education.

Minnesota is fortunate in that some regional networks do exist, including Regional Development Commissions, Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) Consortia, Comprehensive Health Planning Units, the

HECB health linkage project, separate state-level boards for community colleges, state universities, private colleges, the University of Minnesota, and vocational-technical schools, chapters and branches of large organizations, and the federally-funded Occupational Information Service (OIS). What is needed, however, is some sort of overall regional linking agent with specific responsibilities to consumers, a system for comprehensive information storage and retrieval, and an organizational structure which incorporates clusters of functions appropriate to community, regional and state levels. If educational brokering services were to be established in Minnesota, their functions could include:

1. Identifying educational providers.
2. Facilitating the formation of educational networks.
3. Linking educational networks.
4. Assuring delivery of needed educational programs.
5. Serving heretofore neglected learners.
6. Offering counseling, testing, and validation services.
7. Making available information concerning a broad range of educational opportunities.
8. Helping people use extensive job and career information.
9. Assuring client success through advocacy, tutoring, and follow-up activities.
10. Cooperating with educational providers in planning and inservice training.
11. Participating in and encouraging ongoing research relative to community needs, resources, and adult learning styles.
12. Providing information and help concerning financial aid for needy adult students.
13. Training and using both volunteer and paid community personnel to aid in attracting and helping clients.

However, while such services could be beneficial, issues concerning the appropriate role of government in such an undertaking must be addressed. If public policy is to be concerned with equity of access to educational opportunities, then the facilitation of networking and brokering services is a proper function. However, control of the nonformal education sector and domination over educational networks by public agencies is clearly undesirable. In that the offerings of a variety of educational providers should be linked in order to provide a range of alternatives to learners, the networking agent must be one which represents the public, rather than a particular vested interest. In addition, the networking agent should possess the necessary resources to be effective in promoting cooperation among all educational providers and should be able to move freely among all sectors. Currently, most comprehensive brokering systems are being established in the public sector as an integral part of a statewide education system. However, an exploration of available models and a determination of local, regional, and state needs must be undertaken before specific recommendations may be made for Minnesota.

The need for some type of brokering service in Minnesota becomes more apparent when one considers the wealth of regional educational resources which could be tapped to help meet the learning needs of state residents. The findings of the study of Region 7W (see pages 36 ff., IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS) indicate that a wide range of learning opportunities are available, but attract a fairly narrow group of participants. In these times of monetary scarcity and societal change, it would seem a grave error to waste educational resources and overlook consumer needs by retaining an incomplete framework for educational planning which does not include all providers of structured educational activities for adults.

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SECTORING BY CONTENT OF EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

Introduction

Division of learning opportunities in a geographical area according to the nature and content of the educational offerings affords planners with a framework for integrating the activities of all types of educational providers--formal, nonformal, and informal. While the report for Region 7W focuses only on nonformal education, sectoring by topical content areas allows a comprehensive view of an entire range of activity by numerous agencies.

The report for Region 7W identifies the following ten major content areas which represent the range of learning opportunities encountered:

1. Health - Includes physical health, nutrition, patient education.
2. Personal Growth - Includes those phenomena which help one develop a more positive self-image, improve relationships with others, and enhance the quality of one's life within the family and community (e.g., effective parenting, communications skills training).
3. Recreation - Includes hobbies and leisure time activities.
4. Public Safety - Includes fire prevention, civil defense, police, criminal justice, driving and bicycle safety.
5. Public Affairs, Citizenship, Consumer Education - Includes experiences in political action and consumer topics for the general public as well as for certain occupations in the public domain (i.e., teachers and school boards).
6. Culture and the Arts - Includes historical, literary, and artistic activities
7. Basic Education - Includes only Adult Basic Education (ABE) and high school equivalency (GED) efforts.
8. Business and Industry - Includes inservice and career education within business and industry as well as public education which directly relates to these providers (e.g., tours and films).

9. Religion, Morals, Ethics - Includes structured study groups, topical sessions and seminars which are of an organized nature. Excludes sectarian doctrinal training.

10. Agriculture - Includes workshops and inservice training to those persons involved in agricultural careers, but excludes Agricultural Extension and Vo-Ag programs. Also includes agricultural and horticultural topics of interest to the general public.

Each sector includes pre-service and inservice education for those working within that field as well as the learning services provided to the general public. It is important to retain the intended emphasis on the nature of course content rather than on the nature of the provider. This is, for example, an important distinction when discussing business and industry in that any public education dealing with consumer topics is classified as "Public Affairs, Citizenship, and Consumer Education", while inservice education for employees is considered as "Business and Industry." A number of different educational providers, then, comprise a network which provides a range of educational opportunities for adults within each content sector.

Although the complete report includes a discussion of each of the ten sectors and the educational providers contributing to it, inclusion of such information would make this summary paper too lengthy. Therefore, a necessarily brief summary of the findings for the content sectors in which there was activity follows. It should be noted in this context that time constraints prevented in-depth study of all ten sectors. Serious gaps in information, therefore, exist in both the Religion, Morals and Ethics and the Agriculture sectors. The Health sector, however, will be discussed in detail, in that it offers the best example of a comprehensive educational network of this type.

Overview of Health Sector

The Health sector constitutes a complex system for educating both the consumer and the individual staff member. In no other sector studied are the efforts at inservice education so integrated into the daily on-the-job situation. In most hospitals and long term care facilities visited, monthly training calendars and inservice meetings are a routine matter and determined by a special inservice educator; often, staff treatment teams or departments plan and organize their own ongoing education as suits their unique needs.

What education health care facilities are unable to provide for themselves is delivered by a variety of agencies and institutions, including vocational schools, colleges, universities, trade associations, private social welfare agencies, other health care providers, and health-related businesses such as pharmaceutical companies. Often, these services are delivered on-site for health care staff. Workshops and classes outside the immediate area of the respective facilities are also attended by professional health care staff.

A meaningful communications network seems to exist between health care providers and educational institutions, networking being greatly facilitated by the Area Health Education Consortium in St. Cloud. In addition, the attitudes and actions of both the St. Cloud Hospital and the Veterans Administration Hospital in St. Cloud reflect a commitment toward sharing their resources with smaller hospitals and other agencies in the health field.

The emphasis on continuing education in the Health sector has undoubtedly been increased both by consumer scrutiny and by new federal laws mandating strict mechanisms for accreditation for each facility.

Most facilities studied mandate attendance at a specified number of educational experiences for all staff, with requirements for professionals being more stringent than for others. It is interesting to note the growth of consumer-related activities for both patients and the community as a whole, as facilities begin to view their roles on a somewhat broader scale. If current trends continue, such outreach programs will continue to increase and in-patient teaching will become increasingly structured and comprehensive.

It is also important that anyone interested in the health sector remain aware of the many activities which were not in the scope of this report. In general, preparation for occupational entry into the health field is the responsibility of formal institutions, including, most recently, that for Geriatric Nursing Assistants now to be accomplished by vocational schools. Ongoing training, as has been mentioned, is undertaken by a variety of agencies and institutions characterized by instructors with professional status. Consumer and public education is the arena for another group of organizations, most of which are not in the scope of this report. Such education is often on an informal one-to-one basis, such as that undertaken by pharmacists, health interest groups such as United Cerebral Palsy, and doctors and clinics. Many other educational activities, such as single topic presentations, may last less than the three-hour guidelines used in this report. The efforts of individuals and organizations in consumer education are extensive and influential, and must not be overlooked.

Of the organizations queried, five major types provide educational activities which relate to the Health sector: government agencies,

labor unions, trade and professional associations, non-profit business organizations, private social welfare and religious organizations, and regional associations. Figures 1 and 2 summarize the extent of their total offerings relative to each other and their respective share of the total participants.

FIGURE 1

HEALTH:

TOTAL OFFERINGS BY ALL EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS

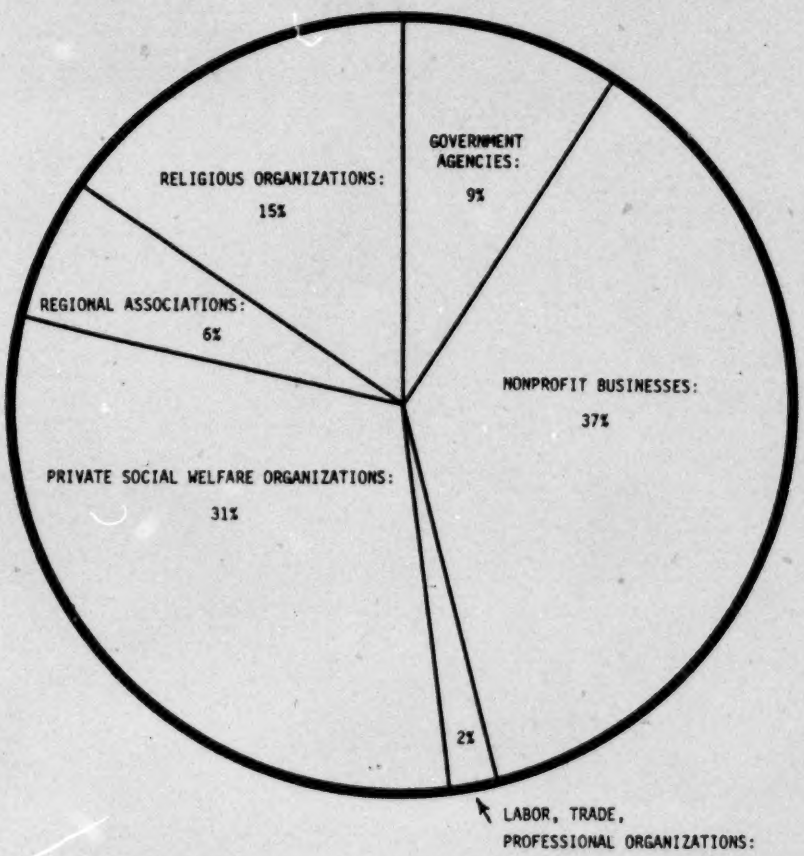
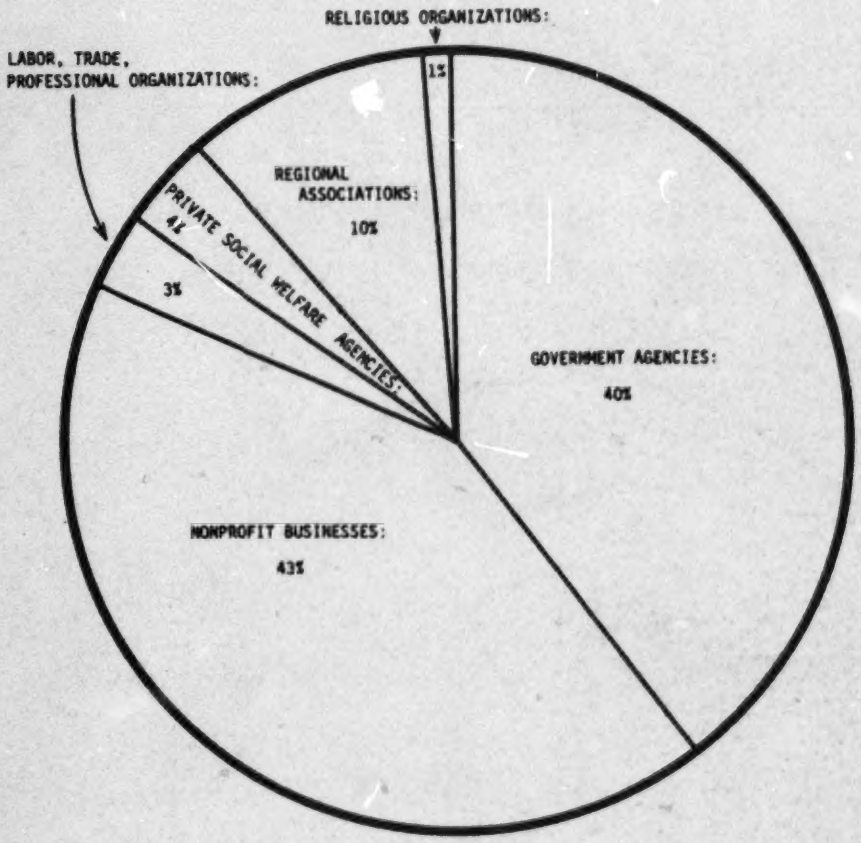


FIGURE 2

HEALTH:

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS IN ALL OFFERINGS



Government agencies, of which four fit the scope of this report, offered 40% of the occupational training activities in the Health sector in 1974-75, enrolling more than 1111 people (12% of the total). The V. A. Hospital and the Minnesota Health Department in St. Cloud

were the most frequent providers, although closer scrutiny revealed other agencies such as two public health nursing services which were able to meet unique needs within their respective communities. Courses offered were either free or involved nominal fees as they were financed through regular agency monies. Outreach to outlying rural areas was not common; communities served included Buffalo, St. Cloud, Elk River, and Foley. The 66 classes offered took place at public buildings, hospitals, or hotels and most often took the form of workshops or presentations, although the V. A. Hospital used media extensively. Clients ranged in age from 16 to 65, although most (at least 60%) were between 23 and 55 years of age; males and females were equally represented. It is interesting to note that government agencies make extensive use of regular staff members of other governmental departments as instructors in their educational offerings, but do not regularly use volunteer community personnel.

The two trade associations studied offered workshops for hospital administrators and trustees and directors of long term care facilities. Their classes comprised 4% (5) of the total occupationally oriented offerings, enrolling 230 people (2% of the total). Workshops sponsored by the Minnesota Hospital Association were underwritten by grants to about the 75% level, and the remaining costs reimbursed by tuition. Offerings by the Minnesota Association of Health Care Facilities were financed primarily by course fees (75%) and to a lesser extent by membership dues. Hotels in St. Cloud and Sauk Centre were the sites in Region 7W which were used for classes and participants were primarily males ranging in age from 23-55.

Nonprofit business organizations in the Health sector provided 43% of the total offerings in Occupational Training, and involved 36% of the total participants. In terms of education to promote personal development, courses numbered 12 (41% of the total), enrolling more than 1,955 people (40% of the total). Education was provided in the respective facilities themselves and took the form of group discussions, workshops, or demonstrations. Participants in experiences aimed at occupational training were primarily females aged 23-55, although a larger percentage were younger than in the other sectors (due to the preponderance of females on nursing staffs). Those involved in Personal Development Offerings (primarily patient education) were more nearly evenly split between male and female and had a wider range of ages. All course costs were financed by patient fees.

Private social welfare and religious organizations served approximately 46% (6,556) of the people enrolled in all educational activities in the Health sector, although they jointly offered only 8 different courses (5% of the total). As might be expected, they were the only providers to use volunteer instructors extensively, which kept course fees low. Many communities were served by these agencies, particularly by the American Red Cross. Students enrolled in course offerings tended to be younger than in the other areas, probably due to the nature of the classes themselves (e.g., water safety, pre-natal).

One regional association, the Area Health Education Consortium (AHEC) in St. Cloud, offered 10% of the total in-scope education in the Health sector in 1974-75. AHEC continues to be an important health education networker in Region 7W, in that it designs and

brokers courses provided through a variety of agencies. Special funding has expired and only occupationally-oriented experiences are currently offered. Courses in occupational development through AHEC are financially supported at the 60% level by AHEC funds and at the 40% level by funds through the Northland Regional Medical Program and the University of Minnesota AHEC.

Figures 3 and 4 summarize the relative involvement of the above providers in occupational training and personal development offerings respectively.

FIGURE 3

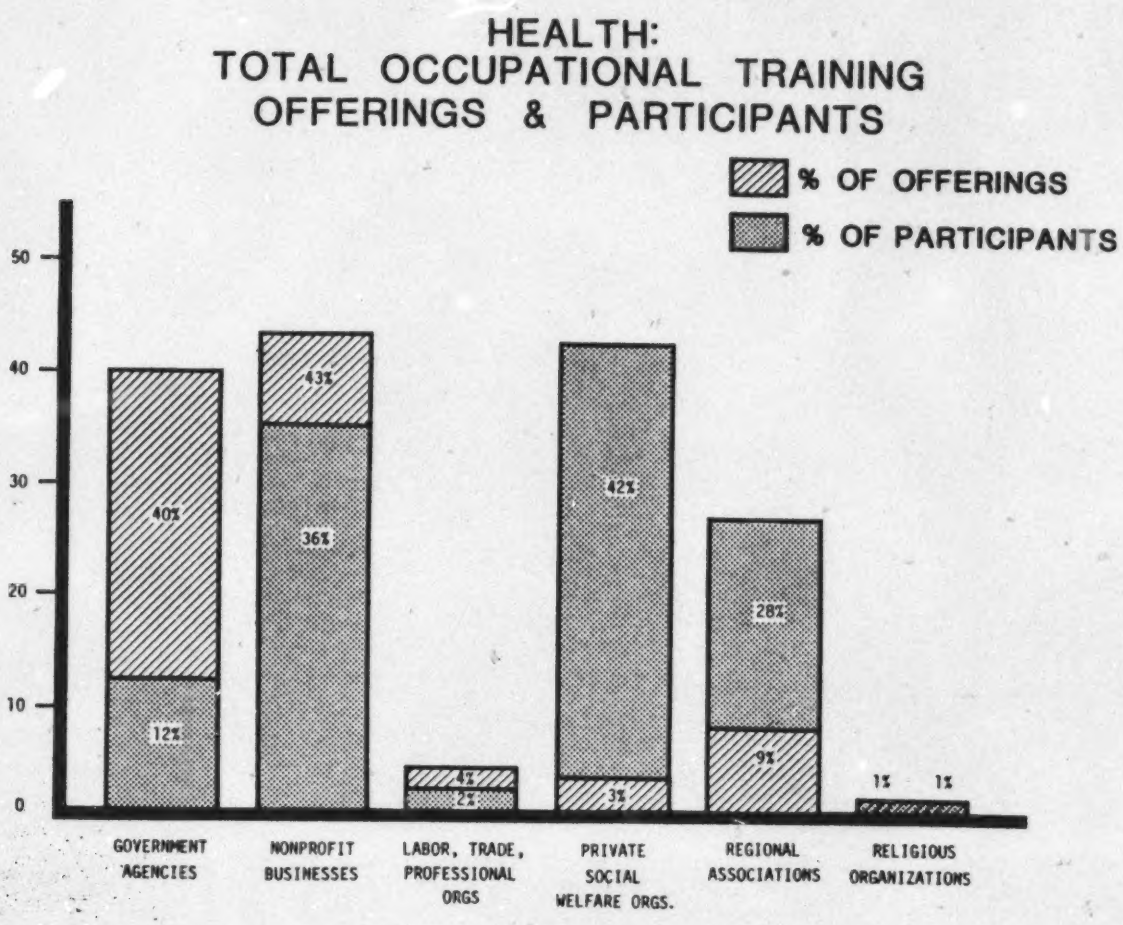
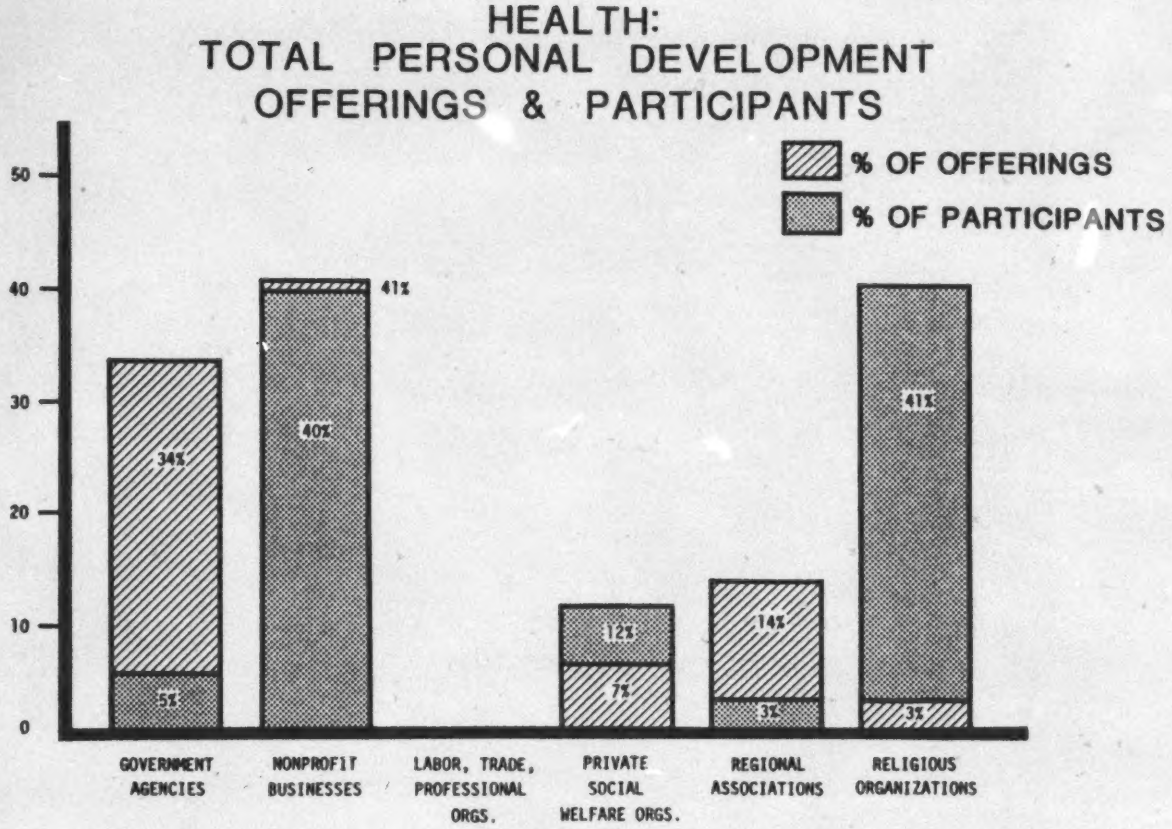


FIGURE 4



Although the Health sector may be cited as an example of a group of health care providers who have made ongoing education a priority, some weaknesses do exist. Small hospitals and long-term care facilities are not as able to provide on-site training for employees as are large hospitals and it is not uncommon for professional staff to commute distances of 30 miles or more to receive necessary education. Many smaller facilities rely on films, filmstrips, and audio cassettes for content; some of these may be less than the high quality needed. Further, many directors of nursing were given the task of inservice

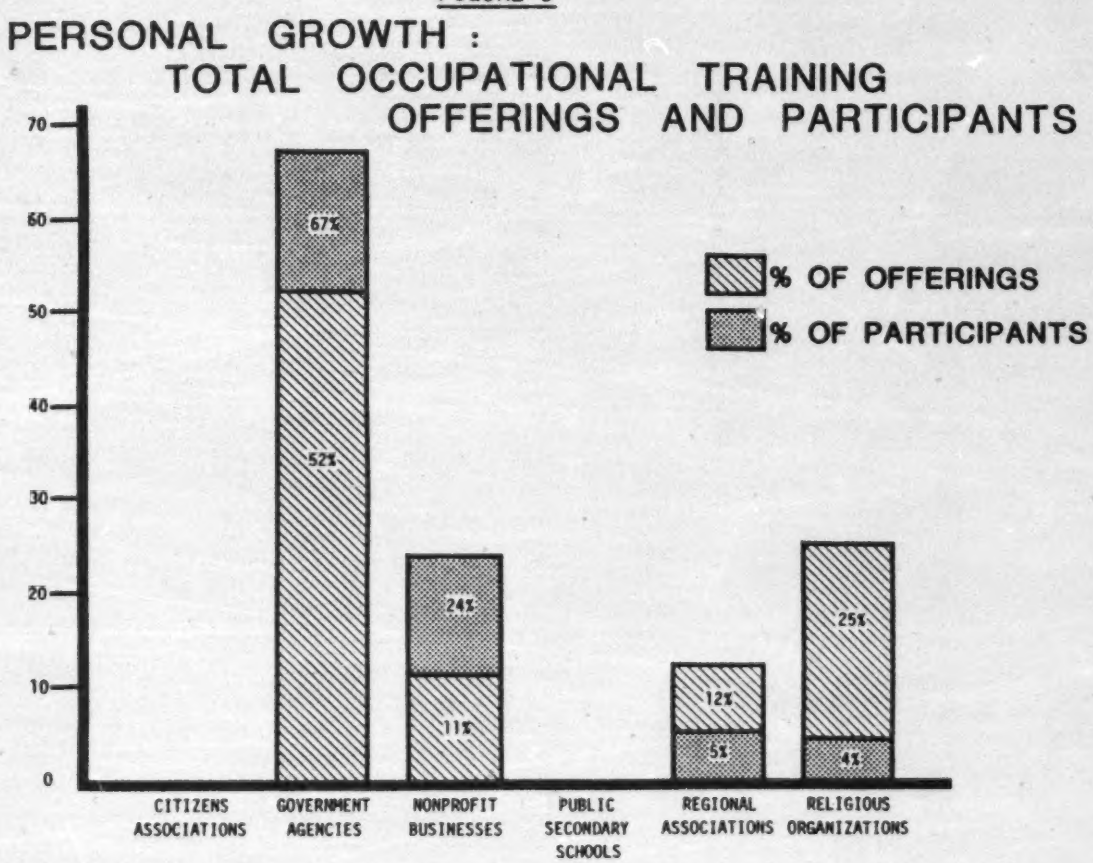
education in addition to their regular duties; these are in reality two very difficult and complex tasks. Although the Kenny Institute has designed a course to teach inservice educators at long-term care facilities about the basic processes of learning, most are ill-equipped to design educational packages for in-house staff. The frustrations of hard-working inservice educators abound and their problems are very real. It seems imperative that additional help be made available to these people. Research for this study leads to the conclusion that more educational opportunities are available to professional staff than to skilled and service staff, and that very little is offered to patients and the community as a whole. Patient education is enlarging through hospital programs, but little is apparent at long term care facilities. With the growth of knowledge concerning aging and the aged, it seems inexcusable to neglect the most needy recipients--the institutionalized aged.

Finally, the isolation of rural Minnesotans from continuing education continues to present vexing questions concerning access and equality of opportunity. If residents in rural areas do not become ill enough to be confined in a hospital, where will they receive needed health care information and education? If preventative medicine is to become a reality, all segments of the population must be included in education, rather than those young enough, educated enough, and urban enough to be easily reached.

Overview of the Personal Growth Sector

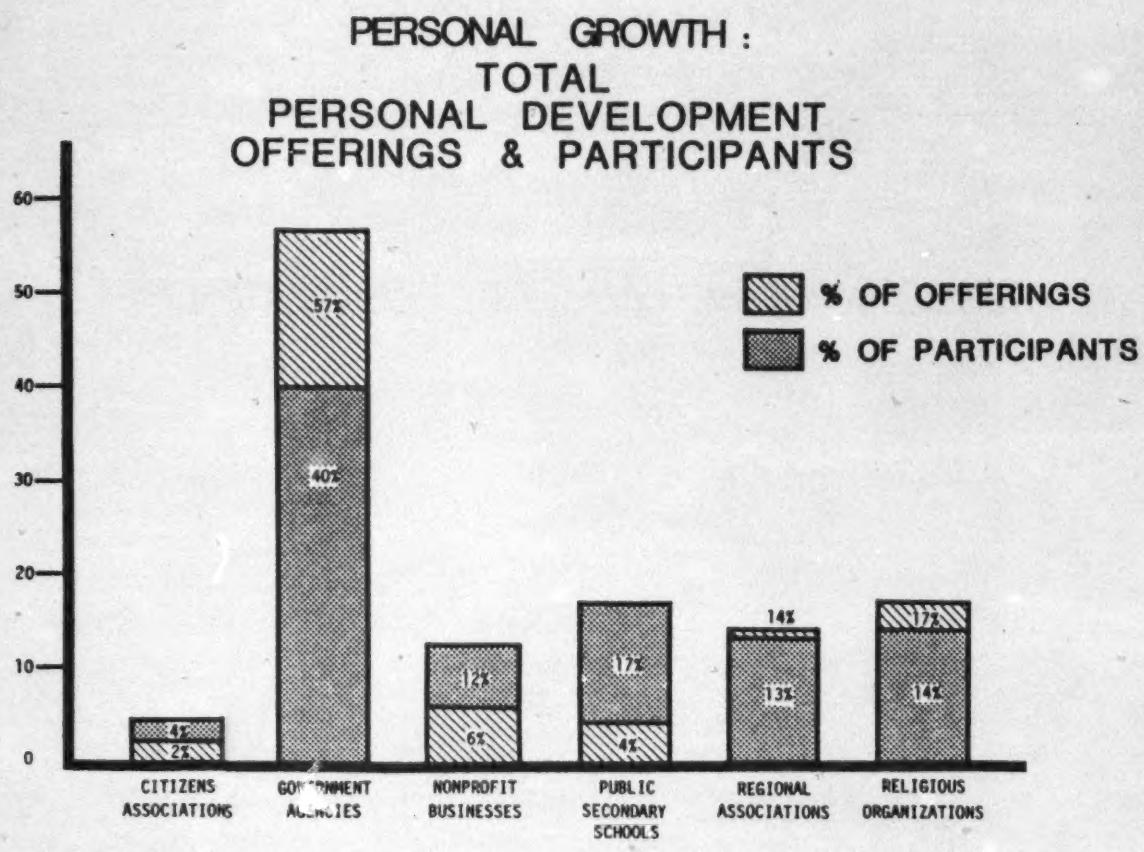
The Personal Growth sector is one in which a high level of activity might be expected, but both in terms of inservice training to those working in the field as well as in relation to public education, efforts lag far behind those in the Health sector. This is unsettling, in that the field of Human Services represents a range of services for the public, including those in personal growth and development. In 1974-75, a total of 166 courses were offered by the six groups of providers in this sector, attracting 5,273 registrants. Figure 5 depicts the relative magnitude of educational offerings relating to occupational training and the participants in them by the different groups of providers in the Personal Growth sector. As is evident, the combined offerings of government agencies and nonprofit businesses attracted the most participants (91% of the total).

FIGURE 5



When offerings relating to Personal Development are considered, Figure 6 illustrates a more balanced picture, with government agencies and nonprofit businesses playing a somewhat reduced role.

FIGURE 6



Overview of the Recreation Sector

This sector was not in the scope of the report.

Overview of the Public Safety Sector

Little activity in this sector was apparent, with only four educational experiences offered during 1974-75 which attracted some 107 participants. The sole providers of the educational experiences in this sector were government agencies and public secondary schools.

Overview of the Public Affairs, Citizenship, and Consumer Education Sector

Research indicated four types of providers of educational activities relating to this sector. Figures 7 and 8 summarize total course offerings and participants relative to each other and reveal interesting differences in drawing power.

FIGURE 7

PUBLIC AFFAIRS, CONSUMER EDUCATION:

TOTAL OFFERINGS

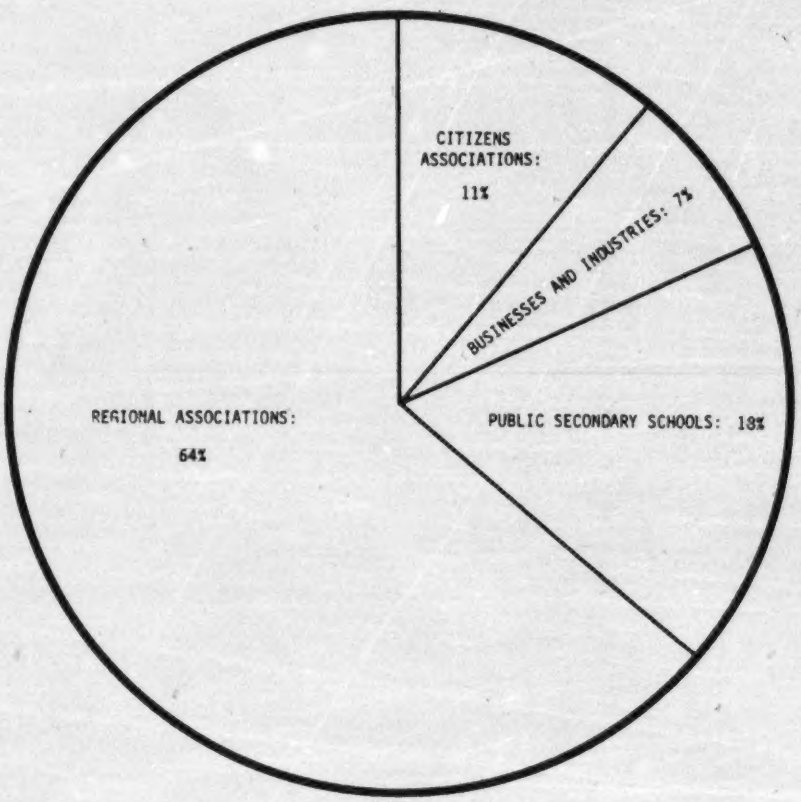
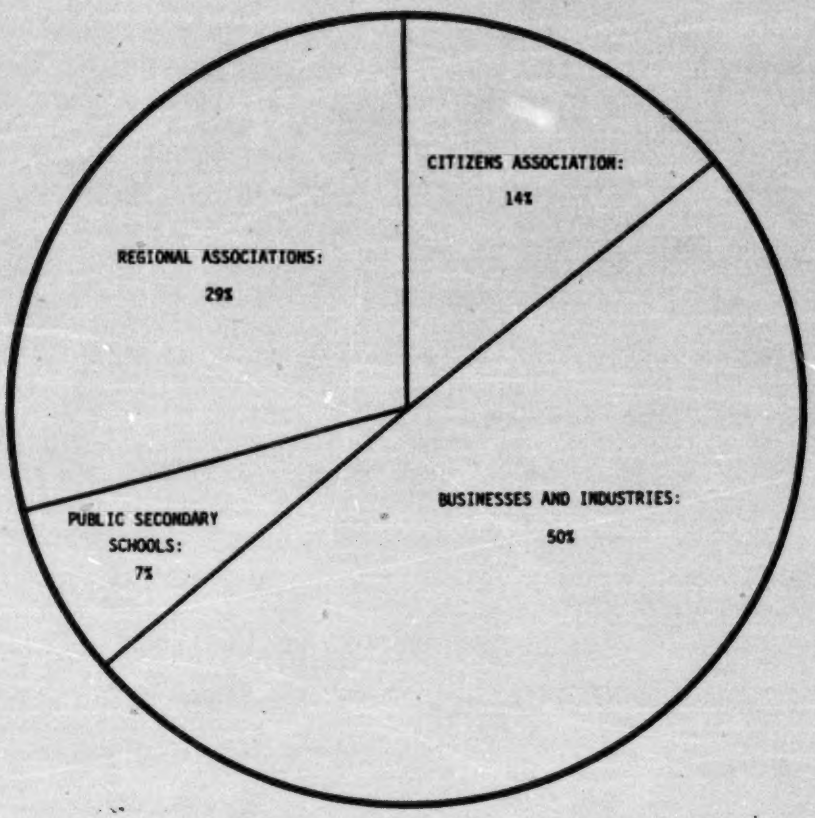


FIGURE 8

PUBLIC AFFAIRS, CONSUMER EDUCATION : TOTAL PARTICIPANTS



A single provider--a local bank in St. Cloud--served 540 people in three seminars, or 50% of the total 1,083 participants in this sector. Although the most active providers of education in the Public Affairs, Citizenship, and Consumer Education sector are citizens associations organized around a particular set of issues, the three-hour minimum duration standard used as a criterion in this study

greatly reduced the number of activities sponsored by these organizations which could be considered in the scope of this report.

Overview of the Basic Education Sector

Of the public secondary school systems queried, only three offered Adult Basic Education (ABE) and High School Equivalency (GED) programs. All courses are made available at the school facility only, which seems to limit the attraction of such instruction to rural residents.

Overview of the Business and Industry Sector

In order to gain an idea of the general role of business and industrial firms in inservice and consumer education, 94 randomly-selected companies in St. Cloud and Paynesville were studied.

Results of the completed research indicate a lower level of activity than might be expected, given the publicity afforded the educational programs of many large companies. In general, the study found that business and industrial firms comprise a largely untapped sector of potential educational providers with ideas, expertise, and varied resources for learning.

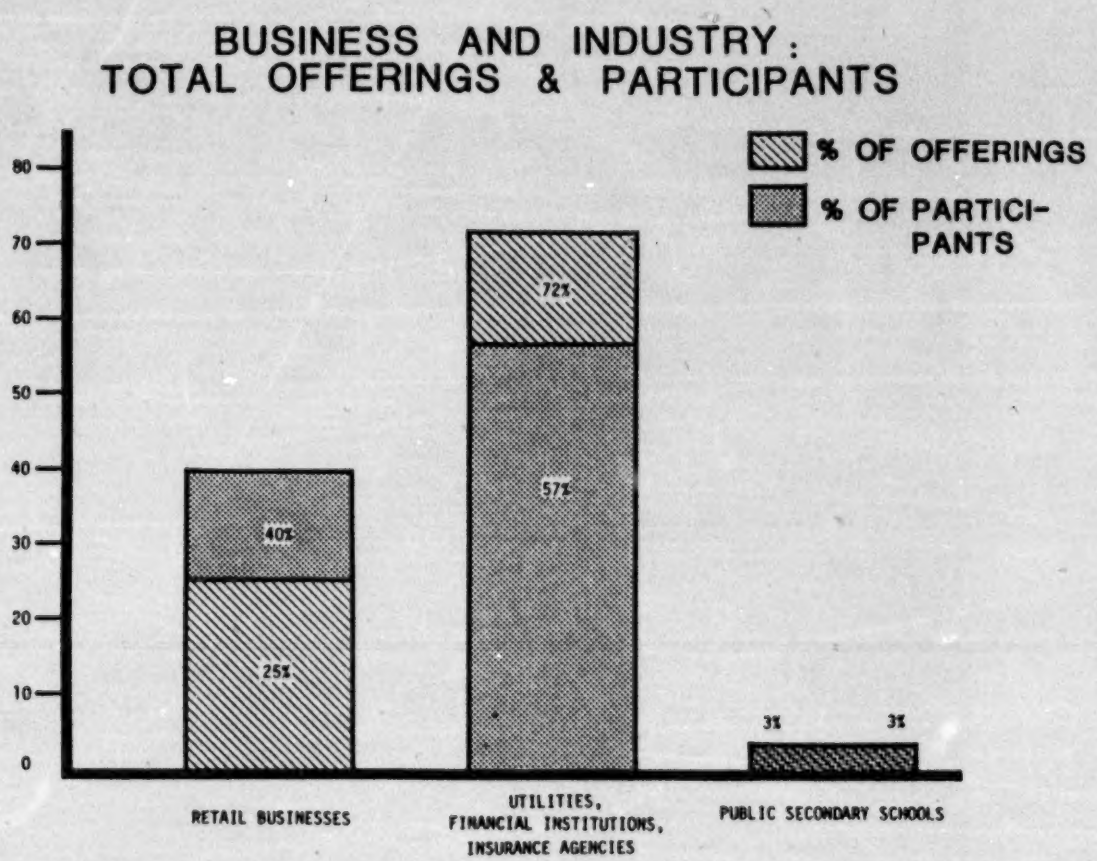
Structured opportunities for inservice education were found to be infrequent and, with one exception, proved to be directly related to the size of the business and the presence of a divisional network. In addition, many companies which are part of such larger frameworks send their employees for training outside the study region.

Of the labor unions, trade associations, and professional organizations contacted, none sponsor educational activities of the type of interest in this report although most hold regular meetings..

Two public school districts, however, offered occupationally-related welding courses through their Community Education programs.

As Figure 9 illustrates, the role played by utilities, financial institutions, and insurance agencies in offering educational activities in the Business and Industry sector is an important one, in that 72% of all offerings emanated from this group of providers.

FIGURE 9



Overview of the Religion, Morals, and Ethics Sector

Although some degree of organized educational activity in individual parishes and churches in Region 7W does occur, timelines for the study necessitated diocesan-level and ministerial association contacts only. As has been noted previously, this sector is not described in sufficient detail as to reflect the nature and extent of educational activity relevant to religion, morals, and ethics.

Overview of the Agriculture Sector

While programs sponsored through Agricultural Extension and the Vo Ag offices proved not to be within the scope of this report, they seem to provide a comprehensive network of learning resources for those people involved in agricultural careers. In that time constraints prevented a more thorough study of the role of other organizations in the Agricultural sector, the information presented in the study is, unfortunately, incomplete.

SECTORING BY TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL PROVIDER

Introduction

In classifying nonformal educational providers into groups, 14 comprehensive categories emerge:

1. Non-profit Business Organizations
2. Businesses and Industries (profit-making)
3. Citizens Associations, Interest Groups
4. Fraternal Orders and Lodge Organizations
5. Government agencies (federal, state, county, local)

6. Labor Unions, Trade Associations, Professional Organizations
7. Libraries and Museums
8. Mass Media
9. Partisan Political Groups
10. Private Social Welfare Organizations and Service Clubs
11. Recreational, Athletic, Sports Organizations
12. Regional Associations and Commissions
13. Religious Organizations
14. Secondary Schools (public, private, and special needs)

Of these, nine offered educational activities in the scope of the report in Region 7W:

1. Non-profit Business Organizations
2. Businesses and Industries (profit-making)
3. Citizens Associations and Interest Groups
4. Government Agencies
5. Labor Unions, Trade Associations, Professional Organizations
6. Private Social Welfare Organizations
7. Public Secondary Schools
8. Regional Associations and Commissions
9. Religious Organizations

While the above providers are discussed in greater detail in the full report, it seems pertinent to address their combined similarities and differences in this paper.

Overview of Findings

In 1974-75, of the over 23,231 people in Region 7W who were served in 460 different educational offerings lasting three hours or longer and of an occupational or intellectual nature, most:

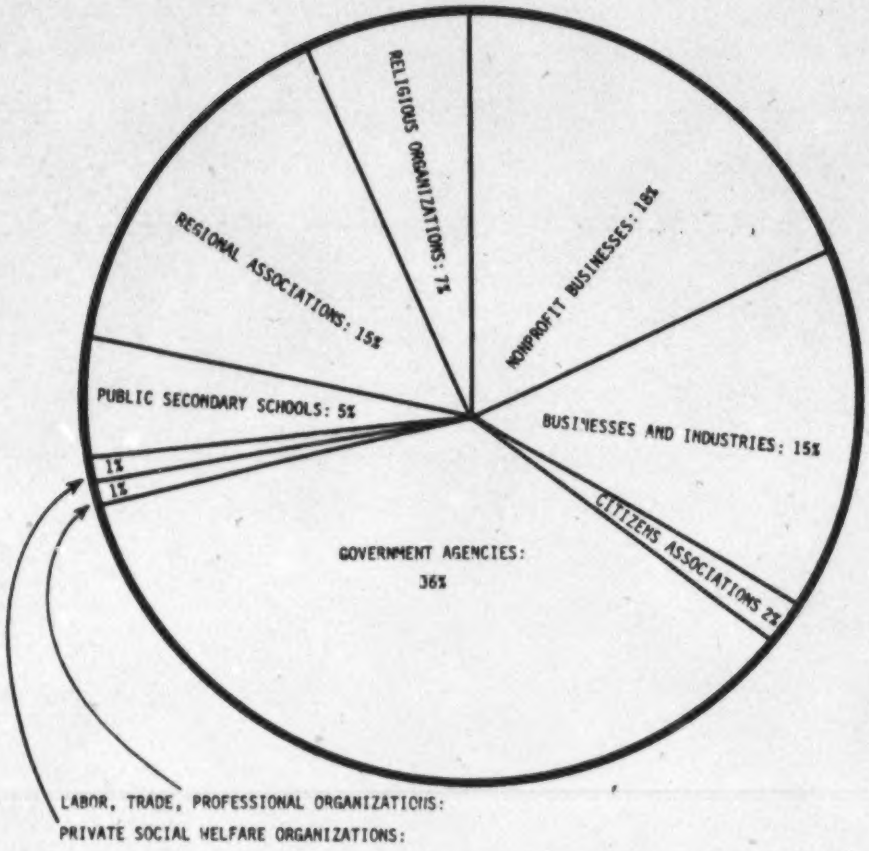
1. Lived in or near St. Cloud and Buffalo.
2. Were between the ages of 22 and 45.
3. Were female (approximately 75%).
4. Possessed a high school diploma.
5. Had some post-secondary education or training.
6. Belonged to the middle socio-economic group.
7. Participated in classes or workshops taught in the traditional lecture-discussion manner in a public school building, hospital, government facility, or hotel.

Occupationally-related courses constituted 63% of all educational offerings and represented 53% of all participants. The offerings of religious organizations and non-profit business organizations (such as hospitals) attracted 54% of all participants in the personal development category, although this does not include any of the patients in educational activities at the Veterans Administration Hospital and is therefore a low estimate. Government agencies were characterized by a relatively large number of total offerings (36%) with a fairly low number of participants (13%), while the phenomenon was the reverse with other groups (such as non-profit businesses, private social welfare organizations, and religious organizations). Figure 10 offers a summary of the relative involvement of the educational providers studied in terms of their total offerings.

FIGURE 10

TOTAL OFFERINGS BY ALL EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS

TOTAL : 460 OFFERINGS



All educational providers studied for the report, regardless of the "fit" of their activities to the data-gathering guidelines, expressed their commitment both to providing and participating in high-quality organized learning outside the structure of formal institutions.

There exists effective communication and sharing among some of the larger providers, who also work with post-secondary schools when additional resources are needed for specific activities. It is this deliberate use of community resources by a few educational providers and their integration into formal, nonformal, and informal learning modes which seems to constitute a beginning effort in networking.

Of even greater significance, however, is the apparent lack of access accorded potential participants in rural communities. When the overwhelmingly similar client characteristics are considered, it becomes obvious that the needs of a large segment of the population are not being met. While an array of factors may contribute to this neglect, it seems crucial that the outreach efforts of nonformal educational providers be supplemented and extended in order to help assure all segments of the population an equal opportunity for lifelong learning.

IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

While this study was intended only to outline a previously undefined and undescribed universe of widely varied educational programs, their participants, and their providers, a number of striking similarities and themes did emerge:

1. Most program participants live in the vicinity of St. Cloud or Buffalo, are between the ages of 22 and 45, possess at least a high school diploma and often some formal post-secondary education, and belong to the middle-income socio-economic level or higher.

2. Living in a rural area constitutes a barrier to continuing education. Geographical, psychological, and socio-economic factors contribute to the problem of lack of access to learning opportunities.

3. A greater proportion of learning experiences are available in occupationally-related fields than in personal development and basic education areas.

4. More inservice training opportunities are available to those in professional or managerial positions than to those with other job responsibilities.

5. Learning opportunities provided in the nonformal sector studied are either free or of nominal cost (less than $10).

6. Instructional methods resemble those employed in the traditional formal post-secondary system. Lecture, presentation, group discussions, and workshops dominate the popularity of use.

7. Many educational activities offered in the nonformal sector last fewer than three hours and therefore were not included in the tabled data presented.

8. Many providers in the nonformal sector maintain mutual communication and planning relationships, particularly if their work is in the same general field.

9. Most providers make use of formal post-secondary institutions when the services they offer seem appropriate (such as for advertising, room arrangements, and registration). In addition, the expertise of selected staff persons may also be solicitied.

10. The Health sector offers the best example of the integration and articulation of formal, nonformal, and informal education. An exploration of the reasons for this phenomena might be an appropriate project for the future.

11. Most providers questioned reported a need for information and assistance relative to a more complete networking of all educational providers, staff training in instructional methods, decision-making concerning programs, and implementation of continuing education activities.

12. Most educational providers studied do not regularly record information relative to all of their learning activities or numbers of participants in that education is an integral and continuous part of their total operation. Therefore, most of the data collected represents a "best estimate figure."

13. St. Cloud serves as a magnet for educational opportunities, with few efforts radiating out of that nuclear area.

14. The Twin Cities represents another concentration of educational resources. Due to its proximity to the study region, many training experiences are held in the metropolitan area, rather than in 7W, particularly if the provider is Twin Cities-based.

15. Most learning experiences take place in hospitals, hotels, and public school buildings.

Vexing questions arise when the first two generalizations reflecting lack of access to educational opportunities are considered. Advancing age, ruralness, low income, and lack of previous formal education are all positively correlated with low participation rates, although nonformal educational offerings attract a wider audience than do those in the formal sector. Specially-designed outreach programs delivered to people who need and desire them are necessary if equality of educational opportunity is a goal for Minnesota.

More important, however, is the need for the networking and articulation of all educational opportunities on a regional basis, with mechanisms for community input and access to information. Providers studied professed the need for increased knowledge of community needs and existing resources, while residents complained of the lack of complete one-stop information concerning the range of educational alternatives open to them. Some type of educational brokering service such as was discussed on pages 10-13 would seem to offer an appropriate solution to the needs of providers as well as serving the interests and needs of citizens.

In the past, the needs of formal educational institutions have served as the basis for planning and resource allocation. This report suggests that the needs of potential participants form a more

appropriate basis for decision-making and policy formation. Research, both in this project as well as in others, has shown that a great deal of education occurs outside of formal educational institutions, particularly at the post-secondary level and that a wealth of learning resources--formal, nonformal, and informal--exists in every community. Capitalizing on regional strengths and assets is a crucial part of planning and implementing educational programs and could serve to pool existing learning resources and develop others.

However, if the basis for educational decision-making is to be changed, numerous policy questions must be addressed, including:

1. What is the appropriate role of government in linking educational resources?
2. If networking is a goal, how may it be accomplished without asserting unnecessary control over educational providers in the nonformal sector?
3. What are the financial and funding implications of identifying and linking formal and nonformal educational resources?
4. How will networking affect formal post-secondary institutions?
5. Should target groups of those potential learners most needing educational services be given priority in any linking activities (e.g., low income, unemployed, ethnic minorities, women, non-high school diploma GED persons)?

Comprehensive educational planning which helps integrate all learning resources and make them both available and meaningful to potential learners of all ages no longer needs to remain a goal for the distant future. The increasing need for recurring education is obvious. That people desire to learn is a fact of human development. That now a greater variety of learning resources and delivery mechanisms exist than ever before is a reality. To fail to integrate these phenomena into a systematic framework for education would constitute a disservice to the most valuable asset of all--Minnesotans.

APPENDIX

FIGURE 11

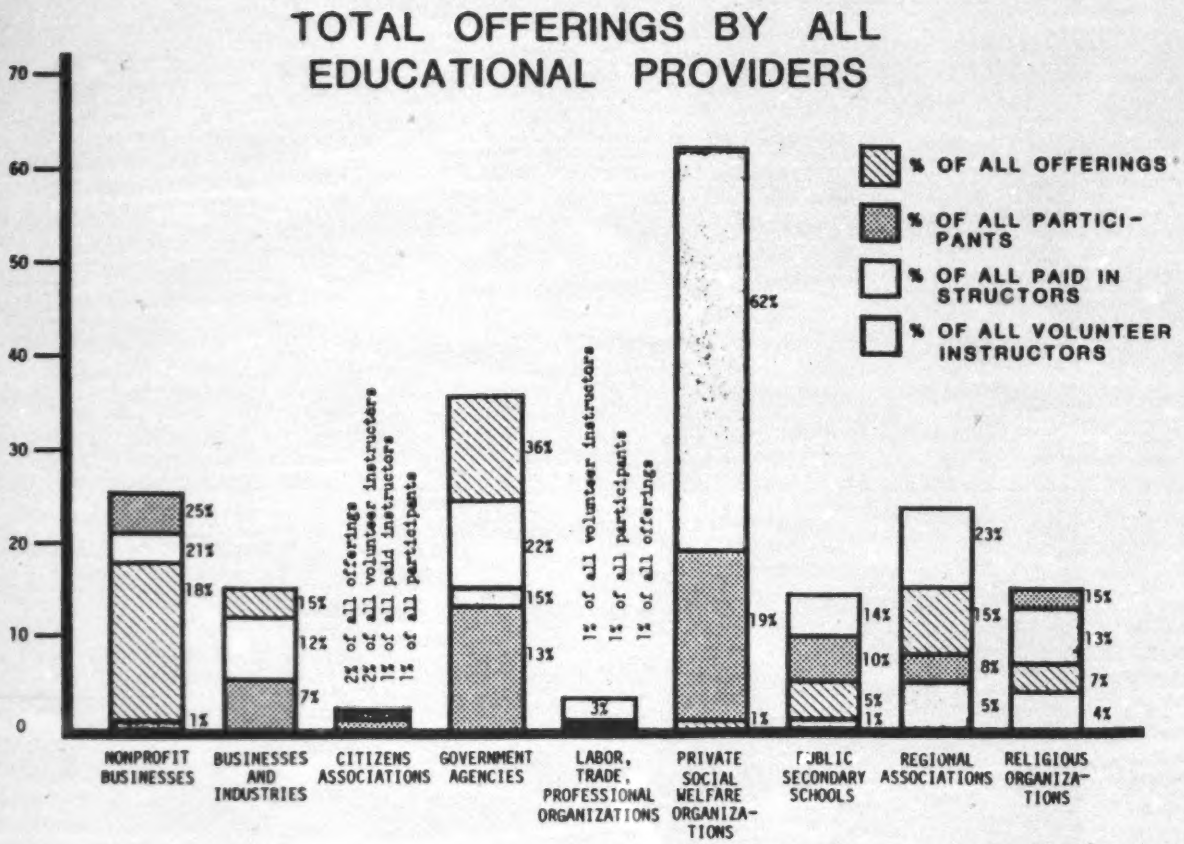

TOTAL OFFERINGS BY ALL EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
% OF ALL OFFERINGS
% OF ALL PARTICI-PANTS
% OF ALL PAID IN STRUCTORS
% OF ALL VOLUNTEER INSTRUCTORS
25%
21%
18%
1%
15%
12%
7%
2% of all offerings
2% of all volunteer instructors
1% of all paid instructors
1% of all participants
36%
22%
15%
13%
1% of all volunteer instructors
1% of all participants
1% of all offerings
3%
62%
19%
1%
14%
10%
5%
1%
23%
15%
8%
5%
15%
13%
7%
4%
NONPROFIT BUSINESSES
BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIES
CITIZENS ASSOCIATIONS
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES
LABOR, TRADE, PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
PRIVATE SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANIZA-TIONS
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS
REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS
RELIGIOUS ORGANIZA-TIONS

FIGURE 12

TOTAL: ALL OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING

TOTAL: 292 EXPERIENCES

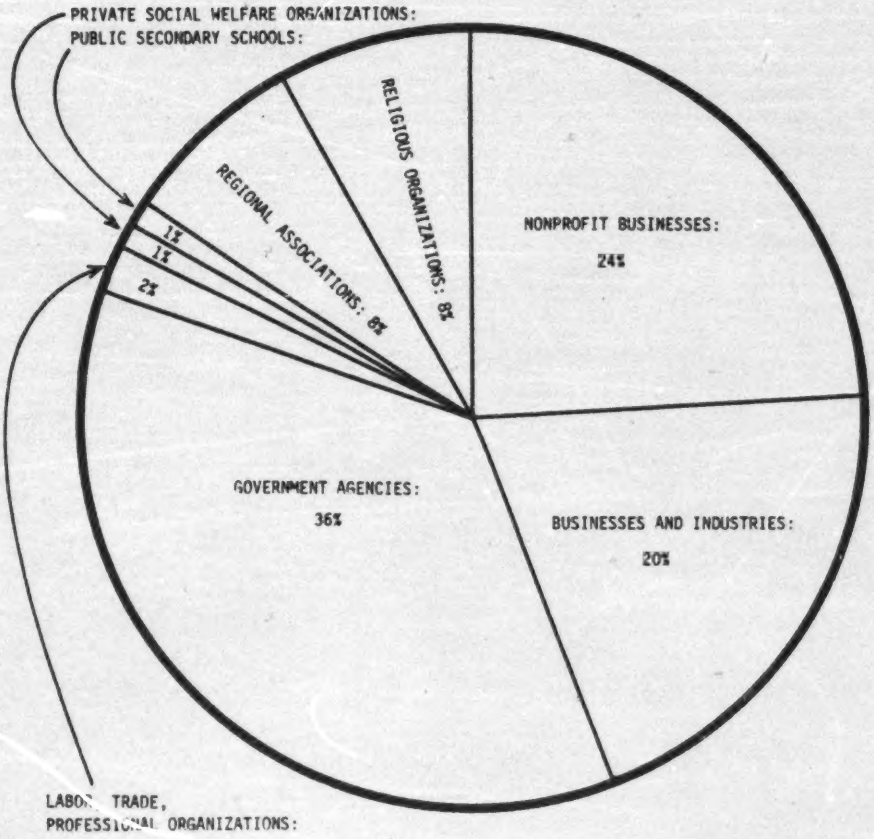


FIGURE 13

TOTAL PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFERINGS BY ALL EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS:

TOTAL: 159 EXPERIENCES